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### Editorial

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## Editorial

We live in challenging times. The divisions among people related to race, gender, gender identity, religion and socioeconomic class are becoming more apparent ... as kinesiologists [and sports scholars, educators and activists], we each need to commit to standing for social justice with every opportunity we are presented with and most importantly, in our classes ... collaboration will provide an effective approach ... this collaboration should be across the disciplines and move us beyond our own research agendas to working with those whose research agendas or areas of expertise are diversity and social justice. Our collective commitment and collaborations will hopefully change the times we are living in to one where each person is respected for who they are, and social justice becomes a part of our [social and cultural] fabric.

Anna Marie Frank, National Association for Kinesiology  
in Higher Education 52<sup>nd</sup> Amy Morris Homans  
Commemorative Lecture (2018, p.155)

Social justice has been a consistent theme amidst the work of the National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education (NAKHE) in recent years, and has, in turn, featured large in the scholarly contributions to the organisation's journal, *Quest* (e.g., Culp, 2016; Sartore-Baldwin, McCullough & Quatman-Yates, 2016). This is, in-part, demonstrated by the existence of a *Social Justice and Cultural Diversity Committee* within NAKHE, which was established in the early-1990s. Many of the papers published within *Quest* (and other sport and physical education social-science and leisure journals) on this broader topic have examined specific issues within the multi-faceted sport and social justice arena exploring, for example, race, gender, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, child labour, financial corruption, physical education practice/praxis, sexuality, corporate social responsibility, sporting disasters, slavery, athlete well-being and welfare (e.g., concussion/CTE), violence, health, education, and a whole host of marginalized and/or oppressed groups—the homeless, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, those engaged with criminal justice systems, those that have been abused

(i.e., physically, mentally, sexually), and/or suffer from mental health problems and vulnerable and fatherless children/young people.

A number of the topics listed above are addressed within this *Special Issue on Sport and Social Justice* in which contributors deploy religious, sociological and capability perspectives to explore the sport and social justice relationship, by way of disciplinary/thematic position statements, essays, and an empirical research studies. Rather than describing each article in-turn (as is the norm in editorials of this nature), we have chosen to use this brief introduction to undertake three tasks : (i) to document and historically contextualise the mono-and-inter-disciplinary study of social justice and sport to strive harder to help forge the bringing about of an enlarged ‘common good’; (ii) to justify the need and importance of listening to, and collaborating with, ‘multiple voices’ within the field (as suggested by Frank above ), for example, from religious, sociological, psychological, political and capability standpoints; and (iii) to provide a number of references and citations as a resource for scholars, activists and practitioners, to access and utilise within research and praxis. Our first task is to

briefly explore the historical, cultural and political context in which the concept of social justice has emerged and is subsequently being applied to the study and critique of sport and physical education practices and administration.

The historical and ongoing turbulence surrounding political, economic and cultural milieu (both at the national and global level) has led to the emergence of a burgeoning literature that examines social justice issues from government legislators, human rights advocates and researchers from across the academic disciplines (e.g., The Centre for Social Justice, 2016, 2015; Hammacks, 2016; Reisch, 2014; Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016; Transparency International, 2016). As intimated above, there is, of course, a large amount of empirical research and scholarship relating to social justice ‘issues’ within sport, and research Centres that focus on social justice concerns within the sport domain, for example—the *Institute for Sport and Social Justice* (University of Central Florida, US), the *Centre for Sport and Social Justice* (California State University East Bay, US), the *Centre for Sports and Human Rights* (Geneva, Switzerland), the *Institute for the Study of Sport, Society and Social Change* (San José

University, US) [the Academy of Sport at the University of Edinburgh](#) and the *Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport* (Loughborough University, UK).

~~Nonetheless,~~ It was not until recently that sports scholars and leisure theorists (e.g., Long, Fletcher and Watson, 2017; Langston, Heaven & Shah, 2016; Dagkas, 2016; Jarvie, 2013, 2009; Jarvie, Thornton & Mackie 2017; Farooq & Parker, 2009; Regaldo, 2009; Traves, 2013; Watson, 2016; Watson & Parker 2015, 2013; Watson, Parker & Swain, 2018), philosophers of sport (e.g., Edgar, 2017; Faccenda, Pantaléon, & Reynes, 2009; Gottfried, 2014; Parker, 2012; McNamee, 1997),<sup>1</sup> those writing on human rights and corporate responsibility within the domain of sport (e.g., Levermore, 2017; Giulianotti & McArdle, 2006; David, 2005; Coggon, Hammond & Holm, 2008) and, sport and exercise psychologists (e.g., Heil, 2016; Krane, 2017; Schinke *et al.*, 2016; Schinke and Hanrahan, 2012) began to highlight, and/or specifically address, the concept of ‘social

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<sup>1</sup>The literature in this area is significant and comes from a range of disciplinary perspectives, other examples include: Sartore-Baldwin, McCullough & Quatman-Yates (2016); Lyndsay & Hayhurst (2016); Marjoribanks & Farquharson (2015); Platow, Hunter & Branscombe (2014); Sartore-Baldwin, McCullough & Quatman-Yates (2016); Traves (2013); Jamieson & Orr (2009).

justice’—hence, the need for, and timeliness of, the present volume which, it is hoped, will be of interest to both academic, educational and practitioner communities.<sup>2</sup>

Given that *Quest* has long since welcomed a range of differing theoretical, methodological and empirical perspectives, our aim has been to put together a collection of essays specifically based upon an examination of ‘religious’ (with a focus on mono-theisms), ‘sociological’ and ‘capability’ understandings of social justice. The term ‘social justice’ was absent from popular and academic discourse in the West until the 1840s when it was adopted by a Jesuit priest named Luigi Taparelli (Regaldo, 2009). According to Palmer and Burgess (2012), the conceptual roots of the term were however embedded in the thought of two theological heavy-weights, Augustine of Hippo (354-430ad.) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274ad.) long before its wide-spread use by modern ethicists, legal scholars, philosophers, Catholic and Protestant senior clerics and theologians and social theorists (e.g., Brown *et al.*, 2016; Habermas, 1989;

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<sup>2</sup>The recent publication of the Policy Paper, *Sport for Social Good: More than a Game*, by the cross-parliamentary UK-based government think-tank, *The Centre for Social Justice* (2015), also demonstrates this trend within the political arena.

Rawls, 1999a,b, 1993; Senn, 2017a,b, 2009, 2006, 1999, 1983, 1973; Sentamu, 2015; Temple, 1976; O'Brien & Shannon, 2010; Welby, 2018); and those involved in the establishment of national and international human rights conventions post-WWII, for example, *The Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, 1948 (Burgess, 2015).

Within both the social sciences and theology, various models of social justice—distributive, divine, procedural, retributive and restorative—have been adopted to examine sport and physical education, based on the foci of investigation (Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016). During the last two decades, the notion of transnational justice, both within society and within sporting locales, has come to the fore, with notions of time, space and the design of *effective* sporting interventions, being key points of debate.

The ways in which different contexts call for different combinations of spaces and interventions attempting to advocate for social justice and social change requires an acknowledgment that the fight for social justice is complex, never static and often lacking sufficient buy-in from a sufficiently broad range of actors or groups to allow for a sustainable end result. Quite often single measure or single



focus approaches to social justice both in and through sport, but also more generally in the contemporary world, fail because an insufficient broad range of stakeholders are involved in the process from the outset.

Thus, a cautionary note that needs to be made, is that of considering not so much the idea of social justice in and of itself but perhaps the idea of transitional social justice whereby sport or physical activity or related notions provide valuable spaces and contexts which allow for transitional social justice to be worked out and negotiated on an on-going basis.

The notions of context and transitional justice are critical factors in identifying objectives, challenges and opportunities for sport and social justice. We need to understand how sport works as part of a process to deliver transitional social justice from 'state a' to 'state b' and within a wider range of contexts than is provided for here but the eleven essays that comprise this special issue do collectively try to advance our thinking about sport and social justice both from a range of perspectives and contexts. Collectively, they key message here is the very simple, but often forgotten idea that the practice of social justice as a valuable asset in sport and its related areas of activity.

Noting this development, and the corresponding corpus of literature within the fields of the social-scientific study of sport, physical education and theology and religious studies, scholars have recently called for interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and empirical research on social justice in sport in order to facilitate a synthesis of these isolated pockets of work (Adogame, Watson & Parker, 2018; Walseth, 2016; Gibbons, Watson and Mierzwinski, 2017; Watson, 2018). The beginnings of this literature may be evidenced in past publications that have addressed the complex relationship between the three mono-theistic faith traditions and sports (utilising both theological and social science literature), while not explicitly exploring the topic of social justice<sup>3</sup>, i.e., Islam and sport (e.g., Mackintosh & Dempsey, 2017; Testa & Amara, 2016; Benn, Pfister & Jawad, 2010), Judaism and sport (e.g., Alpert, 2015, 2011; Borish, 2009; Mendelsohn, 2009; Kugelmass, 2007) and Christianity and sport (Baker, 2007; Hemmings, Watson & Parker, forthcoming 2019;

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<sup>3</sup>For example, chapters within the recent text, *Global Perspectives on Sports and Christianity* (Adogame, Watson & Parker, 2018) that investigate gender justice in the African sport-faith symbiosis, sport-interfaith initiatives that seek to address Muslim-Christian conflict and specific social justice issues surrounding the Hillsborough and Ibrox football stadium disasters (see Deming, 2018; Jones, 2018; Amenga-Etego, 2018; Williams, 2018), do not specifically investigate 'social justice' as a concept but do clearly explore social justice issues in sport.

Hoven, Watson & Parker, forthcoming 2019; Overmann, 2011; Parker, Watson & White, 2016). Given the social, political and spiritual climate we inhabit, we venture, that moving forwards, secular and binary models of social justice will not be sufficient to address the mounting issues presenting themselves within global geopolitics, or for that matter, the microcosm of sport. The editors of a recent Special Issue of the well-respected journal, *Globalizations* entitled, *Faith in Justice: The Role of Religion in Struggles for Global Justice*, , argue this point forcefully in their rationale:

Struggles for global justice are being fought by civil groups across the globe, addressing global inequalities, challenging neoliberal globalization, and demanding to remedy its negative implications. While there has been much scholarly attention paid to secular movements, organisations and networks in the global justice movement ... an often overlooked force, which has been vocal in these struggles, is religion.

(Baumgart-Oshse, Glabb, Smith & Smythe, 2017, p. 1069)

Our hope is that the present volume will serve as something of a starting-point to advance research and praxis surrounding social justice in sporting locales, from varied disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives—and religious and secular approaches. Needless to say, we have not attempted to provide a universal or all-encompassing definition of social justice given that it is widely accepted amongst scholars and policy makers alike that such definitions do not exist. Instead, and by way of a foundational platform, we offer the following statements by a 4<sup>th</sup> century Christian apologist (who became a religious and political advisor to the first Christian emperor, Constantine I) and a 21<sup>st</sup> century social science scholar respectively:

What is social justice? ... it is both a process and goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs ... social justice involves individuals who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world in which they live.

(Bell, 2013, p. 21)

The whole point of social justice consists in our providing for others humanity what we would provide for our own families through affection.

Lactantius (c.250-  
c.325)<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, if sport is to contribute to the common good, be a resource of hope, facilitate the art of making the possible, possible then we need to continue mobilising a growing mass of practitioners and academics (amongst others) committed to rethinking traditional modes of practice in the pursuit of sustainable social justice interventions and transitions. The world has changed—the notion of the expert or public intellectual working in a university, college or public sports space is being questioned. Those working in such environments have a valuable set of tools at their disposal. Sport can unlock many things, it cannot do this on its own, but it is a key part of any armoury seeking to make the art of the possible- possible. In 1989 the Welsh author Raymond

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<sup>4</sup>Cited in Bishop James Jones (2016). *A journey around justice*. Ebor Lecture, York Minster and York St John University, 23 November, p.10 of verbatim manuscript, provided by personal communication.

Williams wrote a book entitled *Resources of Hope* in which he championed the need for commitment and alignment (Williams, 1989). He argued that artists, writers and academics had a responsibility to balance the freedoms that they have with a duty to strive to help with change - what he called the 'art of the possible'. Do we not need this more than ever today, as different contexts and places struggle with the tools that they have, to help forge sustainable forms of social justice?

It is hoped that the contributions provided in this collection both raise awareness of the ways in which sport and its related activities have the potential to forge forms of social justice and more importantly serve as a reminder that much work still needs to be done.

Nick J. Watson, Grant Jarvie and Andrew Parker.

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